



Educating, Engaging and Mobilizing Parents to Take  
Action on Issues that Matter Most To Them...

Testimony before Education Committee

**S.B. 176: An Act Concerning the Smart Start Program**

**S.B. 178: An Act Concerning the Legislative Commissioners' Recommendations  
for Technical Revisions to the Education & Early Childhood Statutes**

**H.B. 5306: An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood**

**H.B. 5308: An Act Concerning a General Education Multi-Tiered System of Instruction & Supports**

Testimony by Marilyn Calderón, Executive Director

Connecticut Parent Power

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Good afternoon, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the Education Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I am Marilyn Calderón, Executive Director of Connecticut Parent Power a statewide parent-led organization that engages, educates and mobilizes diverse parents from across the state to act on issues that matter most to them improving outcomes for all children in areas of early childhood, equitable care/education, health care reform and K-12 school systems.

Connecticut Parent Power works hand in hand with collaborative statewide partners that include, but are not limited to, the Connecticut Association of Human Services, Connecticut Voices for Children, the Early Childhood Alliance and All Our Kin whom all support equitable outcomes for all Connecticut children and their families.

Connecticut Parent Power would like to take a moment to commend the legislature for their shared vision in passing legislative laws that promote the wellness of all children and their families to be able to access quality care and educational services that truly promote preventative benchmarks to ensure that all families succeed with an equitable return on investment socially, emotionally, physically and academically. When we look at the following bills:

**S.B. 176: An Act Concerning the Smart Start Program** we support, but with cautionary measures.

**S.B. 178: An Act Concerning the Legislative Commissioners' Recommendations for Technical Revisions to the Education & Early Childhood Statutes** and **H.B. 5306: An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood** encourage to give more power to the parents/constituents versus the commissioners to ensure decisions are guided/decided by the people versus government at all costs, as this is what our Democracy is built upon for and with our community parents and constituents.

**H.B. 5308: An Act Concerning a General Education Multi-Tiered System of Instruction & Supports**

As we look at what needs to happen in our state at this time now with so many fiscal hardships faced, we need to ensure that all elements of legislation, like the aforementioned proposed, are really in the best interest of our parents, their children and their families, alongside the providers that are executing services and programs day in and day out without compromising the well-being of our most vulnerable, our precious children in early care and education programs with highly qualified staff. We are in support of providing our designated Smart Start spaces to our most vulnerable children and families with a 60/40% rate and possible 50/50% change ONLY IF priority is always given to our most at need families (i.e., meaning having a provision that must include the outreach efforts that Smart Start location has to